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Notes of the Month.

A month ago we made reference in these notes to our Annual Meetings. Since then the other religious bodies have held their assemblies, and there were significant aspects deserving of notice here. Not the least remarkable of such gatherings is that held at Lambeth, where about two hundred and fifty bishops from home and abroad were called together. Apart from matters of particular concern, two general questions have engaged their attention. First, the attitude of the church with respect to general religious conditions; second, the church's attitude to a divided Christendom. As regards the former, it is recognised that never was there greater need of religion and never a more marked hostility to forms of organised religion. The recognition of these facts profoundly influences the desire for Christian unity. Thus, there has been greater evidence of Christian courtesy and consideration than perhaps on any previous occasion. When the Wesleyan Conference sent its fraternal greetings to the Lambeth Conference it evoked the following reply from the Archbishop of York: "We are earnestly seeking to be guided along the path which may lead to a fuller visible manifestation of the unity of Christ's Church. I pray that your own deliberations may help forward the same high purpose, and may also strengthen the endeavours of all Christian people at this anxious time to bear witness to Christ and set forth his kingdom among men." Such a sentiment has our hearty approval and we hope for co-operation in pursuance thereof.

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That there is need of such effort other testimonies make clear. Take for example, this extract from an article by Dr. F. B. Meyer, of London, concerning the condition of the Free Churches: "For a series of years our churches have watched sadly the tide dropping down the beach. The statistics of our membership of Sunday attendance, and of Sunday Schools, have been extremely disheartening, judged as a whole, and with all allowance for notable exceptions, which have been but too few. There was never a higher average in the pulpit, and the amount of money raised for church maintenance and extension, and especially for missionary enterprise, has been extraordinary. There has also been a notable cessation of jealousy and strife between the

various denominations. But these facts have not atoned for the lack of conversions or relieved the tone of depression." There has sprung from this confession of failure a desire for renewed Christian strength and endeavour and a Re-Dedication Sunday has been appointed for October 3rd, "Already the Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Primitive Methodists have accepted the proposal for a day of dedication. The United Methodist Connexional Committee is recommending to its Conference that it be observed. The matter will come before the Wesleyan Conference, and it is greatly to be desired that all the minor bodies and churches among us will determine to join in an act which shall be for us what those days of preparation must have been which were instituted by Joshua and Nehemiah, by the Vaudois and the Covenanters, by the Pilgrims of the 'Mayflower,' and the Moravians of Herrnhut."

* *

It is desirable we should realise what other bodies are feeling and planning, not that we should accept our own unsatisfactory condition cheerily because it is evident that all is not well with other Christian communities. Their task and ours are alike in this: We are all confronted by facts which make the work of religious bodies exceedingly difficult even while we feel as never before that the one hope of this distraught and distressed world lies in a religious reformation. We must take our place in the field of operations not in any spirit of superiority but in the resolute determination to do all we can for the advancement of Christ's kingdom. If our gospel is better and more practical it should be seen so in its effect, and if seen there it will prove more effectual than any verbal commendation. Moreover we need to set our own household in order before we can convict other bodies of neglected opportunities. We hope that the coming months may see us earnest and resolute in our endeavours to secure wider and deeper success in our common work.

* *

The recent degree ceremony at Queen's University was of great interest to us because amongst those present were various members of our household of faith. We were glad to note the success of one of our students, Mr. A. L. Agnew, nor would we withhold our congratulations from Mr. P. H. Richardson who reaped the reward of perseverance when he secured his B.A.

* *

On August 5th 1620, the Pilgrim Fathers left Southampton to find a new home across the sea. Many days elapsed before they reached their desired haven and established themselves in this new land. But the beginning of their mighty venture is worth recording here and now. Later we hope to have an opportunity of speaking at greater length of the action of the Pilgrim Fathers and what it has meant for great Britain and for America. The celebrations here and across the Atlantic fall later, and we note with satisfaction that the Rev. C. J. Street has accepted the hearty invitation of the American Unitarian Association to preach the sermon on the occasion of their celebration in the autumn. We hope and are confident that his utterance will prove worthy of the historic occasion.

TEMPERANCE NOTES.

Year after year at our General Synod meetings a notice of motion is submitted on the temperance question, and year after year the discussion is entirely taken up with the question of compensation. Surely we miss the point. Imagine the Christians at Ephesus expending their energies on discussion of compensation of the vested interests of the idol-makers, they left that severely alone and devoted themselves to the task of destroying idolatry. The real point of any notice of motion on temperance at our General Synod is the attitude of our churches toward temperance. It should not be necessary to argue this point. From the economic and hygienic standpoints the case for total abstinence has gained ground enormously of late. The moral and religious aspect of the question should be ahead of all others, and in most religious communities this is so. Total

abstinence is proved by scientific investigation to be conducive to better health and greater efficiency; it is surely equally clear that it is conducive to a higher moral standard and a deeper religious life. This should be first and foremost a religious question, and the attitude of our churches should be one of enthusiastic interest. If this be the case then it is only natural that we should desire legislative support for temperance reform. Then the cry is raised, "You cannot make people sober by act of parliament." No one who has seriously studied the effects of legislation on drunkenness will pay the slightest heed to this utterly false statement. In many lands and under all sorts of conditions legislation has decreased drunkenness, and no temperance worker who is in earnest will neglect this aspect of the question. At this stage the cry of compensation is raised. Well, in America the liquor trade has accommodated itself to the new conditions, and used its plant and its workpeople in harmless and useful production, without compensation. But as a Church interested in temperance we have no desire even to appear unjust to any. Let all who suffer financially be compensated, but let us push on with the necessary reforms. We cannot but admit that our Church has been rather lukewarm on this question hitherto. Let us no longer be sidetracked by the question of compensation, but frankly face our duty as a Christian Church and wholeheartedly work in the great and truly religious temperance cause.

What Prohibition is doing for America can be judged from the following resolution recently passed at the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America:—"In every part of our land the Prohibition Law, though not yet adequately enforced, has proved a veritable emancipation for the people. It has broken chains of alcoholism, it has decreased drunkenness, it has relieved the distress of poverty, has lessened the work of criminal courts, it has greatly reduced the necessity for inebriate farms, prisons, alcoholic wards in hospitals and other institutions formerly required to care for the victims of the liquor trade. It has increased deposits in savings banks, opened new lines of commercial opportunity, improved the attendance in schools, and redeemed many homes from squalor and sorrow. It has deepened respect for law and order, steadied the public mind in time of great industrial unrest, given to Labour greater efficiency, stimulated all phases of Church activity, and strengthened the fight against all forms of evil."

THE AMERICAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE.

In an entertaining and instructive address, Mr. Charles H. Strong, of New York, put before a meeting, hastily convened for the purpose, an account of the work done by the American Laymen's League. He explained that the League was founded to combat the "retired Christian" type of Unitarian, of whom he told a story of a lady who was distributing window-bills in a certain Lancashire town, and asked one shopman whether he would object to advertising Unitarian Services in his window, to which he replied: "Oh, no! I'm a bit of a Unitarian myself: I believe in nowt."

The Laymen's League was started about a year ago to revive the interest of men—other than ministers—in Church work, which had very largely drifted into the hands of the womenfolk in the States—as, indeed, it has with ourselves. The original aim was to get a membership of 1,000 but before Mr. Strong left the States the number actually enrolled had reached 8,000. Membership is limited to men above 16 years of age, and an outstanding feature in the League's management is that it is largely officered by the young men. The result has been a revival in enthusiasm in Church work as, up till the formation of the League, the young men felt they were given the cold shoulder by the "grey beards." It has been brought home to the latter, too, that they cannot urge their sons to attend worship unless they themselves go. In one case, cited by the lecturer, an

average weekly attendance of 9 men was increased to 57 within six weeks, through the formation of a branch of the League in that church. This rapid increase in the attendance of men led to a friendly rivalry between them and the women—who have had their own organisation established a number of years—as to who should attend best, which was all to the good.

Another feature in the constitution of the League on which the speaker laid stress was that although ministers could become members they could not hold any office. This is important in that it gives the laymen a sense of absolute freedom to discuss all questions which arise—indeed, one of the first things that a certain branch took up was the preparation of a survey of the congregation and its existing organisations, including the Minister, his Wife, the Women's Alliance, the Church Committee, etc., with the result that they found their strong and their weak points and were enabled to take steps to put their house in order.

Mr. Strong also spoke at length in the same eloquent and entertaining manner on the Anglo-American Friendship, but space will only permit of the summing up of his remarks in his own words : " The greatest thing in the world is the right sort of understanding between the English-speaking peoples of the world. We need each other and the world needs both of us."

After a vote of thanks had been unanimously carried, an informal discussion took place in the course of which Mr. Strong explained that a Provisional Committee of a League of Laymen of Great Britain and Ireland has already been appointed, and that the Secretary will visit Ireland in due course.

On hearing this, the meeting decided to appoint Mr. B. Malcolm, Mr. R. Wilkinson, Mr. C. J. M'Kisack, and Mr. E. R. Jackson, as a Committee to confer with the Provisional Committee and report to a meeting to be subsequently summoned. It is earnestly hoped that this Committee will do its utmost to stimulate enthusiasm for the League and not allow its work to hang fire as so many committees are apt to do.

No attempt has been made to convey to the reader any idea of the humour and wit of the speaker, nor the ease with which he touched on the important points, making what might easily have been a dull subject extremely bright and almost breezy.

The Rev. G. L. Phelps presided, as Moderator, over an attendance of about 40, and although Mr. C. H. Strong addressed himself to the Laymen of the Church, there were quite a number of ladies in the audience together with a sprinkling of ministers.

EUSTACE GORDON.

MEMORIAL NOTICE.

MR. GEORGE ANDREWS, J.P.

Sincere regret will be caused by the announcement of the death of Mr. George Andrews, J.P., of Ardoyne, which took place on 3rd July at Portballintrae, where he had been staying for some time. Mr. Andrews during the war devoted himself zealously to war work, and was engaged in special services in various parts of England. When he returned to Belfast last autumn his health was very much impaired, and an attack of pneumonia about Easter of the present year left it altogether shattered. Going to Portballintrae some weeks ago he improved a little, but afterwards became ill again, and gradually sank and died.

The deceased, who was 66 years of age, was the son of the late Mr. Michael Andrews, who in 1819 founded the linen and damask weaving industry which has been carried on ever since in the little village of Ardoyne by the firm and its successors. The deceased entered the business when quite a youth, and after the retirement of his father carried it on until about twenty years ago, when it was taken over by the firm of Messrs. John Shaw Brown & Sons, Ltd., by whom it is still conducted. The factory at Ardoyne is one of the few in Ulster where hand-loom weaving is still carried on.

When the business was transferred Mr. Andrews retired from commercial life, but continued, as he had always

done, to take an interest in local public affairs. He was a justice of the peace for the City, and served for a number of years in the City Corporation, being first returned as Councillor for the old ward of St. Anne's. After the extension of the City he was re-elected to the new Council, in which he remained until 1908, when he retired. For a considerable period prior to the acquisition of the street tramways system by the Corporation, and the placing of the administration of both tramways and electricity undertakings under one Committee, Mr. Andrews was chairman of the Electricity Committee, and took a keen interest in the development and welfare of that enterprise.

An enthusiastic Unionist, the deceased bore an active part in the Ulster Volunteer movement, and was prominently associated with the organisation of the North Belfast Battalion, by which he was presented with a sword of honour in recognition of his services. He was also an enthusiastic Free Mason, and had held the position of Senior Grand Warden of the Province of Antrim. A Unitarian in religion, Mr. Andrews was a member of the First Rosemary Street congregation. His wife survives him, as do a son and two daughters, with all of whom sympathy will be felt.

THE SUNDAY COLLECTION.

It is reported that a minister of a former generation once said of one of his hearers that he "valued his soul at 2/6 per annum." In the same way it might well be said that the great majority of our people value their souls at a penny a week, for that is just about the average amount paid by each member of our Church to the Sunday collection.

I fancy when some readers see this they will think to themselves "Well anyhow, I never give less than sixpence." That is alright so far as it goes, but do they not simply mean that they give a sixpence whenever they happen to be at Church? Do they make a point of paying up the "dues" for all the Sundays they miss? I trow not!

Now, if each of us would take careful thought and make up his mind how *much* he could afford each week—not how little he could get off with—and either make a point of not missing a single service or (which is not *quite* so good) paying up for all services which are missed, what a difference it would make! How many of us realise that if we were each to contribute threepence regularly each and every Sunday the result would be an increase of £1,000 in our denominational income. But then the threepenny piece which looks so small in week-days somehow seems to swell into a very large sum on Sundays.

In the particular congregation to which I belong efforts have been made for some years past to persuade members of the necessity for contributing more liberally to the Sunday collections. The Minister began it one annual meeting; later on the Treasurer took the matter up, and quite recently the Secretary has taken a turn at it. Our people are not easily moved, but this continual reminding has resulted in quite a noticeable increase in the collections during the last three years.

The fact is that it has always been the custom to give a penny, and habits always die hard. People do it quite unthinkingly. What we do not seem to realise is that the value of money has depreciated, and that even in church matters what a penny would do six years ago requires at least double that amount to accomplish now.

NADIE.

GEORGE BORROW; Author and Traveller.

By Mr. A. Orr, Comber.

(Continued.)

"Romany Rye" begins with a description of life in the dingle surrounded by the gypsy encampment, and tells of Jasper Petulengro insisting on Borrow's taking the loan of £50 to buy a certain horse, which he said was too good for a gypsy to sell to advantage. It was of the blood of Syntax, and one of its merits in the eyes of Jasper was

that it had what is known as a rat's tail. The gypsy said this was a sure sign of a good one. This class of a horse is rare, but I've never seen one of them that was not of the best.

Borrow shortly after set out on this horse, and putting up at an inn in Stafford, he entered the innkeeper's employment for a time as sort of clerk, to keep accounts of the hay and corn, and take an occasional look at the yard.

Those were the days of the stage coach, and life here went merrily for a time with many little incidents, till Borrow decided to take the horse to Horncastle Fair, in Lincolnshire, where he arrived after meeting with strange company, and where he sold the horse to Jack Dale, the jockey, who bought him for a tall Hungarian gentleman who accompanied him. In the evening they retired to the hotel to square up for the horse, and on their discovering that Borrow was, in the language of the jockey, "the young chap what certain folks calls the Romany Rye," he immediately ordered the waiter to bring up "three bottles of champagne, the pink kind at 12 guineas a dozen," then with "Here's to the Romany Rye," the jockey and the foreigner hurled two of the bottles right through the window. On Borrow asking the meaning of such strange behaviour, the answer was, "that's the way we honour great men at Horncastle."

They then proceeded to drink the third, and the conversation that is recorded shows that they were far indeed from a state of intoxication. He got £150 for the horse, and as he was bought for about £50, it was not a bad speculation.

About eight years of his life was now spent in an obscure manner; it is thought he travelled, and after that he was for two years in Russia translating the Bible into the Manchu language.

He then reappears in literature with "The Bible in Spain," which is said to be his best piece.

The country (Spain) at this time was having the luxury of a Civil War, and travelling was accompanied with no little danger, but our Author never was found wanting in either physical or moral courage, so, mostly on horseback, sometimes in the company of gypsies who always befriended him, sometimes with a troop of soldiers, more frequently with only his guide, he pushed on, meeting with no worse treatment than being several times cast into prison, usually at the instigation of the priests who, perhaps not unnaturally, regarded the efforts of the foreign missionary with disfavour.

He spent about five years in this work, going and returning three times, and travelling right through the Peninsula landing at Lisbon, thence to Madrid, from there to the extreme north touching at Corunna.

Approaching this place he followed the route taken by Sir John Moore's army in his retreat. All of us are familiar with that beautiful piece of poetry written by an Irishman, commemorating Moore's burial; and for my part I always pictured his grave as being still unmarked, such as it is described in the poem.

"We carved not a line, and we raised
not a stone,
But we left him alone in his glory."

So I got a surprise to read the following:—"In the centre of this "Battery stands the Tomb of Moore, "built by the chivalrous French in "commemoration of the fall of their "heroic antagonist."

It bears one of the simple but sublime epitaphs of the French, "John Moore, Leader of the English Armies, slain in Battle, 1809." Yes! There lies the hero, almost within sight of the hill where he turned upon his pursuers, and terminated his career. The harassed general flying through Castile with his dispirited troops, before a fierce and terrible enemy, little dreamed that he was on the point of attaining that for which many a better, greater, though certainly not a braver man, had sighed in vain. His very misfortunes were the means which secured him immortal fame, his disastrous retreat, bloody death, and finally his tomb on a foreign strand, far from kin and friends.

The demons of the clouds, if we may believe the Spaniards, followed the

English in their flight, and assailed them with waterspouts as they toiled up the steep mountain paths, while legends the most wild are told of the manner in which the stout soldier fell. Yes! Even in Spain immortality has already crowned the head of Moore—Spain, the land of oblivion, where the ancient Lethe flows."

He went south as far as Seville and Gibraltar, even crossing to Tangier, though what was his errand there I do not know, as he says himself he had no bibles printed in Arabic. However, the narrative suffers little from the want of bibles, consisting mostly of yarns by an old Arab whom he fell in with, such as:—

"Good are the horses of the Moslems," said my old friend; "where will you find such? They will descend rocky mountains at full speed and neither trip nor fall; but you must be cautious with the horses of the Moslems, and treat them with kindness, for the horses of the Moslems are proud, and they like not being slaves. When they are young and first mounted, jerk not their mouths with your bit, for be sure if you do they will kill you; sooner or later you will perish beneath their feet. Good are our horses and good our riders, yea, very good are the Moslems at mounting the horse, who are like them? I once saw a Frank rider compete with a Moslem on this beach, and at first the Frank rider had it all his own way, and he passed the Moslem. But the course was long, very long, and the horse of the Frank rider, which was a Frank also, panted; but the horse of the Moslem panted not, for he was a Moslem also, and the Moslem rider at last gave a cry and the horse sprang forward, and he overtook the Frank horse and then the Moslem rider stood up in his saddle. How did he stand? Truly he stood on his head, and those eyes saw him. He stood on his head in the saddle as he passed the Frank rider, and he cried Ha, Ha! as he passed the Frank rider, and the Moslem horse cried Ha, Ha! as he passed the Frank breed, and the Frank lost by a far distance. Good are the Franks, good their horses; but better are the Moslems and better the horses of the Moslems."

I cannot pass from this work without quoting a description of Seville. "Oh, how pleasant it is, especially in Spring-time, to stray along the shores of the Guadalquivir! Not far from the City, down the river, lies a grove called the Delights. It consists of trees of various kinds, but more especially of poplars and elms, and is traversed by long shady walks. This grove is a favourite promenade of the Sevillians, and there one occasionally sees assembled whatever the town produces of beauty or gallantry. There wander the blackeyed Andalusian dames and damsels, clad in their graceful silken mantillas, and there gallops the Andalusian cavalier on his long-tailed, thick-maned steed of Moorish ancestry. As the sun is descending it is enchanting to glance back from this in the direction of the city; the prospect is inexpressibly beautiful. Yonder in the distance, high and enormous stands the Golden Tower, now used as a toll-house, but the principal bulwark of the city in the time of the Moors. It stands on the shore of the river, like a giant keeping watch, and is the first edifice which attracts the eye of the voyager as he moves up the stream to Seville. On the other side, opposite the Tower, stands the noble Augustine convent, the ornament of the faubourg of Triana, whilst between the two edifices rolls the broad Guadalquivir bearing on its bosom a flotilla of barks from Catalonia and Valencia. Farther up is seen the bridge of boats which traverses the water. The principal object of this prospect, however, is the Golden Tower, where the beams of the setting sun seem to be concentrated as in the focus, so that it appears built of pure gold, and probably from that circumstance received the name which it now bears. Cold, cold, must the heart be which can remain insensible to the beauties of this magic scene, to do justice to which the pencil of Claude himself were barely equal.

Often I have shed tears of rapture whilst I beheld it, and listened to the thrush and the nightingale piping forth their melodious songs in the woods, and inhaled the breeze laden with the perfume of the thousand orange-gardens of Seville."

(To be continued.)

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1920, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S.P.I.]

August 1*st*. *Humility*. *Matthew xxiii*. 1-12. *Key text, verse* 11.

As in the Sermon on the Mount so here Jesus shows his reverence for the teaching of Moses. In so far as they represent that teaching the Scribes and Pharisees are to be obeyed, but their example is not to be followed. Many of them were self-righteous and vain, they paraded their piety and delighted in exercising authority, but their faults must be distinguished from their teaching. So in our day the precepts of religion must be obeyed, even though many of the professedly religious are hypocrites.

Phylacteries were charms usually consisting of pieces of parchment on which were inscribed texts. To make broad their phylacteries and enlarge the borders of their garments means to make their religious profession conspicuous by their dress so that everyone should recognise them as righteous; but it is the character you possess and the things you do that really matter, not the outward show.

It is the pride rather than the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees that Jesus here condemns. When they made a show of their piety it was not to deceive people but to win praise. They had deceived themselves and really thought themselves very good. They wanted the places of honour, they liked to be made much of, they delighted in distinctive titles, they prided themselves on being "not as other men." There is always a tendency among religious people to regard themselves as superior persons. It should be noticed that Jesus condemns pride because it is inconsistent with brotherliness. "All ye are brethren." Where there is brotherliness there is no room for pride. We are too much inclined to think of righteousness as a purely personal matter. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Christianity is not being good in order to save oneself. The greatest is one who serves all, not he who seeks to save himself. If we really try to be good and do good it will not make us self-righteous or conceited but humble. As the wise man is humble because he knows his ignorance, and the great artist because he can realise how far his best is from the perfectly beautiful, so those who seek goodness not for the sake of praise but for the service of mankind and for the love of good are humble because they cannot help being conscious of their shortcomings. Though Socrates was the wisest man of his day he was humble, "Knowing himself to be ignorant, he never once imagined himself to be wise." Another wise man, Sir Isaac Newton, spoke modestly of his great achievements, "To myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." So the most saintly men and women have never thought themselves very good, they have been humbled by the thought of how much still remained to be done. Jesus himself said, "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God."

August 8*th*. *Faithful and Wise Servants*. *Matthew xxiv*. 45-51. *Key text, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."*

Begin the lesson by referring back to last Sunday's lesson, "The greatest among you shall be your servant." Service is one of the keynotes of Christianity.

In the passage for to-day the word servant really means slave. The householder had many slaves whom he had bought to do his work. A slave who was noticed to be diligent and faithful would be chosen to be overseer, just as a good workman in a factory is chosen to be foreman.

If the slave who has been made overseer or the workman who has been made foreman thinks that when the master is away he can take advantage of his absence to neglect his duty, to ill treat his fellows, and have what he considers a good time, he will find that unexpectedly the master will return and find him out and dismiss him. This is really a parable and very true to life.

No matter how insignificant we may sometimes seem we have each a duty to perform and a part to play in the world. By doing small things well we fit ourselves for more important tasks. Jack was very fond of cricket and was delighted when he was chosen to play for his school. Great was his disappointment when he found that he was to be the last man in. When his turn came ten runs were wanted for victory, but the pitch was worn and the bowling was good. Jack played a straight bat and kept his end up while the boy at the other end made the runs. His side won, and in the next match the captain put Jack in first because of his steadiness. The first point is, don't despise small things, whatsoever you do, do as well as you can. The second point is, don't get careless because you have got on well. If you have got to the top of your class or have been put in a position of trust you may be tempted to take things easy, but to have succeeded then to be disgraced is worse than not to have succeeded at all, and to get slack because of having been promoted is the way to have that experience. The third point is, that while in the parable the master comes back unexpectedly, in life God is never absent, it is only our knowledge of His judgments that comes unexpectedly. Read Longfellow's "The Builders."

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

August 15th. Wise and Foolish Virgins. Matthew xxv. 1-13. *Key text, "Be ye also ready." Luke xii.* 40.

It was the custom at Jewish weddings for the bridegroom to go late at night to bring home the bride, and the bridesmaids brought him on the way in a joyous torchlight procession. The exact time of the bridegroom's coming could not be told, and sensible bridesmaids provided themselves with sufficient oil to last them if the bridegroom was late. Only half the bridesmaids in this parable were sensible, the others took no oil with them, and at midnight when the cry was raised, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh." the foolish girls looked to the wise to supply their deficiency. This wedding feast had long been looked forward to as a great treat, and nobody wanted to miss it. Had they shared perhaps none of them would have had sufficient to take them the whole of the way, so the foolish had to fend for themselves. While they were buying oil the bridegroom came and the procession passed on. When at last the foolish virgins came to the house they were not admitted, because they were taken for strangers trying to get in by false pretences. The bridegroom naturally thought that invited guests would have been punctual.

The lessons of this parable are fairly obvious. 1st. We miss out opportunities if we wait till they come before we prepare for them.

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

We can resist temptations and seize opportunities only if we have already formed good habits. How we act in a crisis depends on the character we have built up in every-day affairs. The Boy Scouts' motto, "Be Prepared" means keep body and mind and soul alert and fit by constant discipline. 2nd. Others cannot make good our deficiencies. Friends may present us with opportunities, but what we make of them must depend upon what we are, and what we are depends upon our general attitude towards life. If we are alert, keen to do our best even in small things, and thorough in our habits, no opportunity will take us by surprise, for we shall have oil in our lamps, that is, reliable character. If we are careless and allow either failure or success to cause us to become slack, no matter what opportunities may come our way we shall miss them.

August 22nd. The Women's Gift. Matthew xxvi. 6-13.

"The exceeding precious ointment" was a costly balsam chiefly used for anointing the dead. Probably the woman had carefully made this provision for her own burial. The anointing of Jesus was an act of reverence and love, she used up the valuable ointment and broke the alabaster cruse

(*see Mark xiv.* 3), giving up her most precious possession. To the disciples, who themselves loved Jesus and had given up a great deal to follow him, this seemed a waste. Would it not have been better if she had sold the ointment and given the money to the poor? But Jesus recognised the inner meaning of the act, he knew that love does not calculate expense, and further, the embalming perfume reminded him of his approaching end. "Ye have the poor always with you." Jesus was too good a friend of the poor for us to imagine for a moment that he would have them neglected; what he means is that we have countless opportunities of helping the poor, but this woman had only this one opportunity of showing her love and reverence. We are too apt to measure everything in terms of £. s. d., and to pride ourselves on being practical, but the affections have need of being nourished, and seeming extravangance is not waste if it expresses and nourishes the affections. God sends flowers as well as corn and fruit. We have pictures in our homes as well as furniture. Art and Music are not waste because beauty has value though it cannot be priced in terms of money. If we feel deeply we give freely. When people felt deeply about religion they built beautiful and expensive churches. Examples, the fine cathedrals and the building of the temple by Solomon. Not only was this not waste, but those same ages which did not grudge the best for the expression of their reverence were also generous in their treatment of the poor. We need never be afraid of making great sacrifices at the dictates of pure and lofty feeling. It is not waste. Had this woman sold her ointment and given the proceeds to the poor a few would have benefited, but she gave instead an example of self-denying sacrifice which seemed to yield no good fruits, but as a matter of fact has lived through the ages to teach us how much better is unstinted love and reverence than a calculating prudence.

August 28*th. The Betrayal of Jesus. Matthew xxvi.* 47-56.

It is difficult to understand how Judas Iscariot came to be chosen as a disciple. He must have had some good qualities which attracted Jesus. The accounts of the betrayal do not give us Judas' own account of his motives. It might have been avarice, but the thirty shekels was a small sum. It may have been mistaken zeal, a desire to force the hand of Jesus so that the kingdom might be hastened by some miracle. Or it might have been that gradually there came a change in Judas, his enthusiasm being damped by delay and his reverence for Jesus being weakened by what seemed to him signs of weakness, the refusal to gain his ends by the use of force, for example. The name of Judas has become a by-word for treachery, but it is possible to betray Jesus to-day.

We betray Jesus whenever for the sake of wealth or position we depart from the straight path of duty. Browning's "The Lost Leader."

> Just for a handful of silver he left us,
> Just for a riband to stick in his coat.

We betray Jesus whenever we are impatient at the slow progress of goodness and seek short cuts to the kindgom by employing evil methods to achieve good ends. Jesus told his disciples to put up the sword because he had no faith in force as a means of attaining his ends.

We betray Jesus whenever we follow him because we think it is profitable and not because we think it good and right. Following Jesus will sometimes bring loss and discomfort and, if we are not ready to bear these things and still be faithful we betray him, pretending to be his disciples when we are really his opponents.

> Conscious of right, nor fearing wrong;
> Because I am in love with Love,
> And the sole thing I hate is Hate;
> For Hate is death; and Love is life,
> A peace, a splendour from above;
> And Hate, a never-ending strife,
> A smoke, a blackness from the abyss
> Where unclean serpents coil and hiss.
> Love is the Holy Ghost within;
> Hate, the unpardonable sin.
> Who preaches otherwise than this,
> Betrays his Master with a kiss.

REPORTS.

Ballee.—On Friday evening, 4th June, in Ballee schoolroom, Rev. J. H. Bibby presiding, an interesting and instructive conversational address, founded on extracts from the diary of a local farmer of repute some 150 years ago, was delivered to a large and appreciative audience by Mr. Wm. A. F. Martin, Solicitor, Downpatrick.

The diary in question was written by a Mr. Nevin, with painstaking accuracy, and covers the period 1766 to 1796. Its contents, as summarised, revealed that its author held the office of High Constable for the Barony of Lower Lecale, and that he was an officer actively associated with the volunteers of that period, who subsequently formed the nucleus of the rebel army in the Irish rebellion of 1798.

A Presbyterian, connected with Ballee Meeting-House, Mr, Nevin seemed to be of a philanthropic disposition, as he gave liberally to assist various local churches and charities, as well as poor people of all creeds, and he undoubtedly had very considerable literary tastes and ability, as his well-stocked library bore testimony and the method of expression of thought, revealed in his style of writing.

Following an historical sketch of the period—one of unrest at home and abroad—the lecturer dwelt upon the customs, methods of farming, amusements, and mode of travelling then in vogue in the locality, typical indeed of those prevailing throughout Co. Down, and, in addition, made very interesting references to the cost of living, prices of produce, the abnormal length of parliamentary elections and the personalities of the candidates engaged, race meetings at Killyleagh, Castlewellan, and Downpatrick, with its "pedlars' court" held on such occasions, and the considerable volume of trade carried on at the then military port of Killough, and also at Downpatrick, where even with the low custom dues then levied, the amount realised by the Crown exceeded £8,000 per annum.

The diary further revealed that potatoes and turnips, as crops, were quite unknown, that whilst tea was a scarce commodity and practically the same price as to-day, whiskey was only 2/6 per gallon, and the wages of agricultural labourers averaged £4 per annum.

The subject was admirably treated by Mr. Martin, who held the rapt attention of even the youngest of his hearers for upwards of two hours, and that the lecture was universally admitted not to be "dry" is borne out by a general desire to hear its repetition at a future date.

To a musical programme, arranged by Mr. Robert McCullen, M. Inst, M.E., Miss Irvine contributed "The Hills of Donegal," "God send you back to me," and "Smile Awhile," and she was also associated with Mr. Hogg in the duet "The Keys of Heaven." The latter gentleman scored a huge success by his rendering of a local event, recorded in rhyme by a former member of the congregation, now also "far across the foam," and entitled "The Ballyclander Ball," and responded with "The Mountains of Mourne," always a favourite item locally. In addition to the foregoing songs, Miss Gibson, Downpatrick, tastefully rendered "Come to the Fair," and "An Old-fashioned House,"

On the motion of the Chairman, a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Martin and the kind friends who so willingly and cheerfully contributed to the success of the evening was passed by acclamation. Mr. Martin suitably acknowledged the compliment on behalf of those concerned, and incidentally intimated that it was his intention to write a local history of Ballee and neighbourhood, and welcomed the loan of any suitable manuscripts for this purpose, assuring his friends such action would be greatly appreciated and every care taken of any old documents he might receive.

The proceedings concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

During the month the young people of the congregation have inaugurated a tennis club, this being rendered possible by Rev. J. H. Bibby kindly placing at their disposal the necessary ground.

Thanks are also due to the same rev. gentleman for his kindly interest

in the (mixed) hockey club, organised by the same young folk, and carried on, with marked success, "in due season."

* *

Belfast: Domestic Mission.—Our work here continues in a most encouraging and satisfactory manner. The attendances at the Sunday Services are gradually improving, the average for the past month being, Morning 38, Evening 68. Flower Services were held on Sunday, June 27th, conducted in the morning by the Missionary, afternoon by the Rev. G. J. Slipper, and in the evening by the Rev. M. Watkins. In spite of the very unfavourable weather which continued throughout the day, attendances were very good, as also were the collections, which will be devoted to the Winter Work for the young people. The gifts of flowers, which were very considerable and for which we were deeply thankful, were afterwards sent to the Children's Hospital and the Belfast Charitable Institution. On Sunday, July 4th a Commemoration Service was held in the evening, when a fitting tribute was paid to thememory of those who, in those anxious days of the same period in 1916, "gave all that we might live." The Memorial Tablet was draped with a Union Jack, under which was hung a Chaplet of Laurels. The Order of Service prepared for the National Conference Commemoration Service was used, after which the Dead March was played, the congregation remaining standing. The week-end rambles still retain their popularity several having been conducted since our last report. On Saturday, 17th July, the Choir have arranged their outing to Groomsport, and on Saturday, the 31st we hope to take the Scholars to Holywood. Owing to sad and unforeseen circumstances, our Adults' Outing, which it was hoped would take place on Saturday, 17th, has now been postponed until August or September. During the past month the Missionary has been able to help, either with clothing or other means, seven very needful cases, six of which are families who are most devoted attendants at the services.

Cairncastle Old Meeting House—The Sale of Work which was held on 29th June was an unqualified success. The day was, not to say too much for it, although not quite warm enough to please most people, one of the finest in the month. Over three hundred people came from near and far, including parties from Larne, Ballycarry, Whitehead, Glenarm, Raloo and Holywood. The chair was taken at 3 o'clock by Mr. Sam Magill, of Larne, who introduced as opener Mrs. Richard Patterson, of Holywood. There was brisk business in the School-room at the Work Stall, Provision Stall and Bran-Tub until ten o'clock. In one corner of the room there was a "Peep-Show," which was either too much out of sight or not well enough advertised to attract a crowd; but now and then the sound of laughter issuing from that quarter seemed to indicate that it contained something good. The usual sports were provided in the school grounds, where also there were two Palmistry Tents which were well patronised. Other premises were kindly afforded by the Masons and the Orangemen, the Lodge-room of the former being converted into a Tea-room, whilst the Hall of the latter was occupied by Mr. Sam Corry, of Belfast, who gave a succession of highly appreciated entertainments (including Punch-&-Judy-Show, conjuring tricks and a clever dog), which must have been witnessed by nearly every one who came to the Sale. After ten o'clock there was a dance in the Orange Hall, which was kept up until after 4 a.m., Mr. McCullough from Carnalbanagh, supplying the music on his dulcimer assisted by his friends. The workers of the Old Meeting House received numerous and generous contributions and donations, whilst members of the two other churches in the neighbourhood rendered service on the day of the Sale as if the enterprise had been their own. It is expected that when all is settled up, there will be a gain of £300 clear of expenses.

* *

Clough.—On Monday, June 28th, a very successful function was organised by Miss L. Irvine, which was a garden party at her own place, Rath-

mullen, in aid of the Flower and Cake Stall at the forthcoming Bazaar. The evening was fine and many gathered together. After tea, the party indulged in games, etc., on the sea shore, and all enjoyed themselves thoroughly.

On Saturday, July 3rd, the annual Sunday School Excursion took place As usual the scholars went to Newcastle Lunch and tea were provided by the Slieve Donard Hotel in the Railway Pavilion. The arrangements for the day had been made by Messrs. J. McCammon and Hugh Donnan. Sports and games were enjoyed on the sands, and a vast amount of enthusiasm and rivalry was evident during the racing competitions, The weather was in our favour, and a very happy day it proved to be. The majority returned home by the 6-50 p.m. train, whilst others stayed till later, and returned by motors and traps.

On Thursday, July 8th, a Bazaar was held by our congregation in the Presbyterian Church Hall. There was a good attendance at the opening at 3-30. Cars with full complements of passengers arrived from the station, and trade continued to be brisk till late, in spite of very inclement weather.

The opening ceremony was ably performed by Miss F. Davidson, Bryansford, who, in a most appropriate speech, referred to her family's past associations with Clough. Dr. T. Cromie, Clough, occupied the chair, who, in his remarks, alluded to the relations between the two congregations, the Presbyterians and ourselves. Where there used to be bitter enmity, there was now mutual sympathy. He also referred to Miss Davidson's association with the district, and her connection with the family of Dr. S. C. Nelson, of Downpatrick.

Among those present at the opening were :—Rev. J. A. and Mrs Kelly, Rev. R. and Mrs Scott, Rev. R. and Mrs. Philipson, Rev. M. Watkins, Mr. and Mrs. N. Lowry, Mr. George Allen, J.P., Miss Cromie, Mr. Harold Smith, Mr. and Mrs. T. Hughes, Mrs. W. McKenzie, and Mrs. J. McAuley.

Stallholders :—

Refreshment Stall : — Mrs. J. McCammon, Mrs. J. Haslett, Miss Nelson, Miss Bell, Mrs. J. Logan, Misses C. and E. and N. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Fraser.

Cake and Flower Stall :—Miss L. Irvine and Miss Hogg.

Utility Stall :—Miss H. Robinson, Mrs. W. J. Watts, Mrs. J. Wilson, Mrs. Moore, Miss Shaw, Mrs. J. Kirkpatrick.

Work Stall :—Mrs, Hay, Mrs. Davies, Miss Ferguson, Miss Scott, Mrs. McKenzie.

Children's Stall :—Misses Hay, McAuley, Adamson, L. Robinson, Masters Hay.

Half Hour Concerts :—Artistes—Rev. M. Watkins, Mr. Smith, Miss Irvine, Mr. Bob Hogg, Misses Jennie Nesbitt, Vera Nelson, Madge Huddleston, Molly Hay, Katherine Logan, Kitty Moffatt ; Masters Kenneth Nesbitt, Crone, Nesbitt, Norman Robinson, Alfred Robinson, Bob Hilland, Jim Hay.

Amusements were superintended by Messrs. John McCammon and Sam Huddleston.

Balloting :— Messrs. S. Robinson, W. J. Watts, Hugh Shaw, Hugh Donnan.

Stewards :—Messrs. Wm. Kirkpatrick. W. Robinson, J. Larmour, D. Larmour, H. Newell, W. Hogg, Willie Wilson, James Ferguson, J. Wilson.

* *

Greyabbey.—A most successful Bazaar was held in the Concert Hall, kindly lent by Major General Montgomery, on the 8th and 10th July, to provide funds for the purchase of an organ and to renovate the Church and Manse. The opening ceremony on the 8th was performed by Mrs. James Moore, Belfast, Mr. C. McKisack occupying the chair. Mr. Eustace Gordon presided on the 10th and Mr. John Montgomery, Belfast; declared the sale open. The members of the congregation were most enthusiastic, and worked loyally to ensure the success of the undertaking. In addition to their many contributions they subscribed a sum of £270.

* *

Killinchy. — The Sunday School Anniversary was held on Sunday, June 20th. Services were conducted morning and evening by the Rev. Albert

Whitford, Moneyrea, to whom our thanks are due for appropriate and instructive discourses. The Morning Service was a large and representative one. The Choir and Sunday School rendered special hymns and an anthem. The collections reached the total of £8 18s. 5½d. The Annual Sunday School Fete was celebrated on Saturday, June 26th. The teachers and scholars gathered in the School and were regaled with cakes and lemonade and afterwards walked in procession to Templebrook Valley Lawn, kindly lent for the occasion by the Misses Watson, to whom our best thanks are due. We would especially thank these ladies for their kind thoughtfulness in providing drinking water for the children in a convenient and accessible way. In the evening a large crowd gathered to enjoy the games. The weather was all that could be desired, and the gathering dispersed at 10 o'clock.

* *

Larne and Kilwaughter.—On 6th July the annual Fete, Sale of Work, etc., was held in the grounds of the above with the usual success materially and socially. There was a large company in the schoolroom at 3 o'clock when Mrs. Scott, of the Bridge, Dunmurry, and daughter of Mr. Jas. Morrow, J.P., opened the proceedings formally. Mrs. Scott said it gave her very much pleasure to be there that afternoon. There was avery warm corner in her heart for that old place, so full of happy memories of good times and kind words. To come there again and feel she was not altogether forgotten, to revive those happy memories and renew friendships, was a very great happiness to her, and it was very kind of the Committee to give her the pleasure of declaring that sale open. It was almost unnecessary for her to wish the sale every success—though, of course, she did that with her whole heart —but it seemed as if success was already assured. They had all the ingredients of success present—well-filled stalls, good weather, willing helpers, and generous purchasers, so she would not detain them any longer, but formally declare the sale open. (Applause.)

Mrs. Scott was then presented with a magnificent bouquet by the pretty little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gingles.

The usual vote of thanks was moved in felicitous terms by Mr. Magill, passed with loud acclamation by the audience and duly conveyed by the minister, who availed himself of the opportunity of referring to the many services rendered to the congregation by Mrs. Scott's father as well as to the congregations of Dunmurry, Glenarm, and others of the N.S. Church. Bearing in mind that gratitude is a lively sense of favours to come, he hinted broadly of yet another service to the congregation and minister expected at Mr. Morrow's hands. The weather was good save for an envious attention for a few minutes from Jupiter Pluvius, damping the grass, but by no means damping the ardour of many dancers to the strains of Ralph Hay's orchestra which dispensed liberally bright and lovely music to the enjoyment of all. As on former occasions, Mr. E. Holmes, our brilliant organist, provided two organ recitals at 4-30 and at 8-30, of a very high-class character. In addition to his own exquisite contributions on his delightfully sweet toned Crawford organ, sacred songs were given by his friend, Mr. Arneill, of Belfast, in a style above criticism, and by two of his pupils, with wonderful taste and feeling for artists so young—Miss Annabell Crawford and Miss May A. M'Clure.

MARRIAGES.

WHITESIDE—MOORE.—June 3rd, at the First Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast, by the Rev. George V. Crook, William Whiteside, of Killead, Co. Antrim, to Ellen J. Moore, of British, Antrim.

ELWOOD—ROBINSON.—On 7th inst., at All Souls' Church, Belfast, by the Rev. Alex. O. Ashworth, Robert Thomas Elwood to Annie Sophia Robinson, both of Belfast.

HARCOURT—KINNEAR. — June 22nd, at Ballee, by Rev. Ralph Philipson, B.A., assisted by Rev. G. J. Slipper, Joseph Harcourt, of Jerritzpass, Newry, to Lily, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Kinnear, Hollymount, Downpatrick.

MY SHIPMATE.

My mate he was—that's on the plank,
And his body soon we'll send
To the place, where he'll stand in the foremost rank
As a man who died for a friend.
The topsail tye had bust aloft,
The whole of it came down clear,
And I'd have been lying where he is now
If he hadn't thrown me clear.

He took the weight on his broad chest,
And was crushed, for he jumped too late;
The one in the world I loved the best,
He died in saving his mate.

Together we've wrought, and fought, and drank,
But no more together we'll sail,
For he's under the ensign that's over the plank,
He's weathered his life's last gale.

"Commit his body to the deep,"
"God rest his noble soul,"
"Doff your lids, lads! steady! heave!
Together with the roll!"
There! now he's gone, the weights are good,
They'll sink him fathoms deep;
God grant, when my last top-sail's furled.
We'll together, shipmate, sleep.

E. J. B., Barque "Vimcira."

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